

The Sun.

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Bellamy at Washington.

Last week, on Friday, the Democratic Senator BUTLER of South Carolina presented the petition of nine colored citizens of that State, praying Congress to appropriate \$7,200 to enable them and their families to emigrate to Liberia, and to live there for six months at the expense of the United States Government. The printed heading to this petition indicates that it is part of an organized movement, and that similar applications will follow it to Washington.

On the same day Senator CORKRILL of Missouri presented a memorial of the Johnson County Farmers' and Laborers' Union, proposing a law enabling farmers and others holding real estate to borrow money of the Government, secured by farm and real estate mortgages to half their value, at one per cent interest a year for twenty years.

A still more important petition, addressed to the President of the United States and the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled, comes from San Francisco. It emanates from the "Headquarters of the Executive Committee of the Unemployed, 1153 Mission street." The citizens signing this appeal, according to the certificate of a notary public appended, number over sixteen hundred. The appeal declares that owing to unprecedented bad weather, the evils of competition, and a vicious financial system, the subscribers and their families, and thousands of other citizens of the United States residing in San Francisco, find themselves in a state of helpless destitution. They have applied in vain to the local authorities and their fellow citizens. Therefore they turn in dire distress to the Federal Government for immediate succor. They confidently feel that the power that armed and equipped a million men for the preservation of the Union "can now arm and equip an army to preserve its citizens from starvation." The appeal continues:

"We ask not for charity; we plead for justice. In the conscious dignity of American manhood, we demand that the means of existence by honest labor be placed within the reach of all. We respectfully suggest that \$5,000,000 be loaned to the city and county of San Francisco until such time as the California State Legislature can meet and take action for aid city and county to issue a like amount of bonds at two per cent per annum and deposit them with the United States Treasury at San Francisco; these bonds to be made payable to the city and county, and non-transferable. We further pray that, otherwise, work be commenced immediately upon the foundation of such national work as is acknowledged necessary for the protection of the city and county, and such as is done by the War Department, without the intervention of contractors, so that we be provided with work, and, under no circumstances, forced to become the recipients of charity, and that our petition be promptly accepted, and that we be mustered into the Government service, to serve during good behavior, or until voluntary resignation, unless sooner discharged."

The appeal ends with the form of an oath of loyalty and good faith, by which the members of the First, Second, and Third Regiments of the Industrial Army solemnly swear to support the United States Constitution; to maintain the peace thereof, even until death; to discharge efficiently the duties assigned to them; and "that hunger shall never induce us, in thought or action, to break our allegiance to our country, or violate our laws." "Though forced," say the subscribing citizens, "to succumb beneath the iron hand of starvation, we will remain true to our flag and country."

We should add that the petition of the helplessly destitute citizens of San Francisco is rather elegantly printed in tinted ink on paper of excellent quality. These three appeals are fair specimens of the unnumbered prayers and demands for pecuniary assistance from the Federal Government that are now pouring in upon Congress. They differ in substance, but the principle or assumption on which they rest is the same in each case: The community owes a living, or means of a livelihood, to every citizen who, through misfortune or incapacity or temporary circumstances, is unable to take care of himself; this is due not as charity, but as a right; and it is the business of the Federal Government to see that the obligation is discharged.

Now, let us see what the acceptance by Congress of the responsibility implied in these appeals would mean. It would mean money to Liberia and provision for half a year's maintenance there are things that the nine colored citizens of South Carolina have a right to ask and expect for themselves and their sixty-three dependants, the same measure of assistance is equally due to every other citizen of African descent who may desire to emigrate. If they should all want to migrate, the obligation remains; and, at the rate suggested by the nine South Carolinians, the cost to the Government would be more than \$500,000,000.

Gen. BUTLER estimates that the total of Government indebtedness on farms in the West alone is less than \$3,450,000,000. That is regarded by people as an excessive estimate. It certainly is not so large to represent the aggregate of farm mortgages in the whole Union. Now, no law could be passed compelling the United States Government to lend money at one per cent per annum for the exclusive benefit of the farmers of Johnson county, Missouri. The debt-laden farmers of every other county in the United States must have their turn, too, and fools they would be if they did not speedily replace their present mortgages at eight or ten per cent interest, with the one per cent loans of the beneficent Government at Washington. This arrangement would require an investment, let us say, of \$3,450,000,000 by the Government.

The scheme of paternal relief suggested by the members of the Industrial Army in San Francisco would also be very costly in its equitable application to the unemployed workmen of the whole country. The appropriation proposed for the benefit of the three regiments in San Francisco county is \$5,000,000. But just as soon as that transaction was completed, segments of the unemployed would organize in every county of the Union, ready to take the oath of industrial allegiance, and prepared to demand, with a right equally just with that of the Californians, their share of support from the national Treasury. Roughly speaking, the population of San Francisco county is to the population of the United States as 1 to 200. The Government's appropriation for

the support of all of the regiments of the Industrial Army would have to be not less than \$1,000,000,000. To sum up:

For the colored emigrants to Liberia, \$500,000,000
For the farmers' loans at one per cent, \$3,450,000,000
For the support of the Industrial Army, \$1,000,000,000
Total, \$5,000,000,000

So much for the three schemes of relief and assistance here considered, and yet they would be only the beginning.

Will Bismarck Reappear in Politics?

According to the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, whose editor was recently invited to Friedrichshagen, the ex-Chancellor means at no distant date to take his place in the Prussian House of Lords, and also to accept a seat in the Reichstag. This news seems confirmed by information which has reached Vienna from an independent source. As Bismarck has made no secret of his disapproval of the Kaiser's labor programme, the purpose of his reappearance in politics is seemingly the creation of a new party under his leadership, whose aim would be to check the social and economical tendencies of his sovereign. The report of his return to public life has excited a good deal of discussion on the Continent and in England, some writers applauding his intention and others professing to believe that a dignified retirement would be more conducive to the maintenance of the ex-Chancellor's reputation. The *Kron Zeitung* expresses the belief that "in view of the loyalty of Prince Bismarck to his royal master he will give his advice only when asked for it by his Majesty."

That loyalty to a sovereign should be supposed to imply abstinence from criticism of proposed legislation, shows how imperfectly the English theory of parliamentary government is understood in Germany. Her Majesty's Opposition is an essential part of the British legislative machinery as is her Majesty's Government, and the loyalty of an ex-First Minister can in no way be better displayed than by a vigilant and fearless criticism of the policy of his successor. It is Bismarck's own fault that the principle of Ministerial accountability to the people's representatives has not been accepted in the German empire, and even in Prussia the system received a severe shock through his governing without a budget for some years previous to the year of '66. He is the one man in Germany who can redress the injury which he has himself inflicted upon parliamentary institutions, and should he fear of being taxed with inconsistency will present him with doing so, should he be by combination of parties, be able to defeat the new Chancellor's programme, he will undoubtedly expect the latter's resignation and his own reinstatement, and should such an event take place, a precedent of Ministerial responsibility will have been established. The truth is, that even the German type of parliamentary government has not yet had a fair trial, because the representative of the sovereign has hitherto utterly eclipsed in respect of prestige and popularity the spokesmen of the people. There is, indeed, no doubt that Bismarck, if the office of Chancellor were to be filled by him, would receive more votes than any other German. He is, therefore, just the sort of man to teach the young Emperor what is meant by his Majesty's Opposition, and to transform the anomalous régime, at present prevailing in Germany, into a genuine example of parliamentary government. It might prove a wholesome discipline for the Kaiser were he to receive some of the lessons which WILLIAM PITT inflicted on the youthful and self-sufficient George III. It would also be a spectacle of peculiar interest to those who believe in the manhood and intellect of Germany to watch the attempt to make the traditional respect for the Hohenzollerns outweigh the national gratitude to Bismarck.

But while we have no doubt that Bismarck's reappearance in politics as the leader of an organized opposition would benefit Germany, and would, indeed, constitute his crowning service to his country, we are by no means certain that it would benefit himself. It would at once provoke a large part of his countrymen to assume toward him a depreciatory, if not hostile, attitude. The reptile press, which he has taught to sting others, would have fangs for him. Instead of the unbroken chorus of acclamation and affection which followed him into retirement, he would hear the hateful outcries of a party to whom he was a dislikable. His great abilities, which whatever may have been the deductions of his judgment, have hitherto been consecrated to the general welfare of the fatherland, would be unconsciously or purposely devoted to partisan advantage. His fame, which is now the heritage of a whole nation, would become the capital of a faction. Wirepullers would trade upon a reputation which is perhaps the most repellant trophy bequeathed by our own times to history. Upon Bismarck, as upon other men, parliamentary warfare would leave its scars, and even should he be successful in his career, it would leave scars upon the face of the nation, and the hostility of his sovereign and of a large minority of Germans.

It should also be remembered that Bismarck, although an impressive and at times an eloquent speaker, when allowed to develop his ideas at length from the rostrum, is ill fitted for debate. His temper is too imperfectly controlled for the give and take of parliamentary discussion. On the floor of the Reichstag he will no longer be invested with the majesty which used to clothe him in his rôle of Chancellor, and it is to be feared that in some of his hot-headed outbreaks his dignity may suffer. His experience will be of great value, and his opinions will have great weight. Moreover, his willingness to assume the duties of a simple Deputy after having shaped the destinies of Prussia for almost a generation, and played for nearly twenty years the part of arbiter for Europe, will signify a decline in the Reichstag and its functions in the eyes of Germany and of the world.

Handwriting.

The correspondent who wrote to us the other day with regard to the faulty instruction in penmanship in the public schools, touched upon a matter of importance. The average handwriting of our people is bad; worse, probably, than that of any other nation. It is either crabbed and illegible or of a mechanical character, in which individuality is lost; and poor instruction is chiefly responsible for the evil. Instead of improving upon nature, our haphazard method perverts it, with the result that boys and girls who might write well if properly taught go through life cursed with a bad cursive. How could it be otherwise, when their teachers set them the example in that respect?

The run of our school teachers write a poor cursive, with grace, beauty, or distinction. When it is legible, it is apt to be vulgar and commonplace. It gives readers of their letters an unfavorable impression, and a letter is often the first introduction of an individual, and from it the recipient

forms his first and most fixed impression of the quality of the sender.

Penmanship, therefore, should be a department of instruction in the public schools upon which the greatest care is bestowed. It is more important there than algebra, geometry and three-quarters of the other branches by which the Board of Education sets so much store. A first-rate writing master is more essential to a great mathematician, and he deserves a higher salary. He is harder to get than a high-sounding, new-fangled Professor of Pedagogy. The English are good penmen, as their ordinary commercial letter shows, and even the writing of very many English mechanics is clear and dignified. The Irish are even better writers, and the German mercantile hand is quite admirable. But with us the rule is the other way. Usually the letter is a scrawl, or the chirography is of the copy-book kind, cheap and poor, and mechanical in appearance.

Will there be no reason why Americans should not be as good as other peoples, if they were suitably instructed in youth. An establishment of great value and practical assistance to success in life, and their correspondent says, is neglected as something of minor concern.

The writing master is a functionary of the school who is of foremost importance. But he must know what good handwriting is.

The Dullest Mayor.

As Mayor of Albany, Mr. JAMES H. MANNING seems to be supporting gloriously his previous reputation as editor of the dullest newspaper published anywhere in the world. We refer, of course, to the *Albany Argus*, in the consummately dull columns of which we find the text of Mr. MANNING'S inaugural address to the city.

It will be believed that this remarkable young gentleman, in a pompous and platitudinous way, proceeds to instruct the Albany Aldermen as to the necessity of tariff reform by the Federal Government. After an allusion to GROVER CLEVELAND, as "one who has acquired the first place in the respect of the nation," Mr. MANNING makes the city tax rate a pretext for an excursion into national politics, in the course of which he remarks:

"Our people are still compelled to pay, directly and indirectly, exorbitant and unnecessary taxes under the Federal tariff law, and it is proposed to increase these amounts to less than \$1 for each inhabitant of the city. The Federal tariff law exacts annually several millions of dollars from the people of this city. You can, of course, do nothing, except in your capacity as American citizens, to reform this wrong, which is so very oppressive upon the manufacturing and commercial interests of Albany, and the rapid growth of its trade and depriving labor of its just remuneration. Indirectly, however, by making the lesser burden of local taxation as light as is possible, you can, of course, do nothing, except in your capacity as American citizens, to reform this wrong, which is so very oppressive upon the manufacturing and commercial interests of Albany, and the rapid growth of its trade and depriving labor of its just remuneration. 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